

CRYSTAL FINISHING SYSTEMS, INC.

Mark and Laurie Matthiae started Crystal Finishing Systems, Inc. in June of 1993. Crystal Finishing Systems provides a variety of industrial, architectural and commercial coating applications. The types of coatings include air-dry dip, baked enamel, Kynar architectural, protective, Teflon, thermoplastic powder and plasite and aluminum extrusion.



In a short amount of time, Mark & Laurie needed to come up with money, a facility, equipment and a few dependable people in order to get things rolling. The two of them rounded up a small amount of money and the necessary financing to purchase the initial ingredients. They were entering into an incredibly risky venture with only one customer lined up, knowing that if they were unable to please that customer, they were in big trouble. Reality, common sense and general business rules were challenged and redefined. Mark and Laurie had put it all on the line to fulfill a dream.

With his already established role as general manager and half owner of Precision Body and Frame, Mark was ready to leap out on his own. With his small business knowledge, confidence, perseverance and insane schedule, Mark was determined to start his own business. He began with three employees, a simple dip line for coating and one small spray line for top coating all size parts with air-dry wet spray.

During its first anniversary year, Crystal Finishing Systems, Inc.'s customer base was on the rise. Mark began checking out options for expanding the current facility but found out that the building was located in a wellhead protection area. With the assistance of the SBA 504 Loan Program along with the bank, they were able to make an offer to purchase the facility at 2608 Ross Avenue in Schofield, Wisconsin. At that time, they had five employees.

In 2000, Crystal maximized their building space to 100,000 square feet and in 2001 purchased the property next to them. The newly acquired building added 20,000 square feet to the total operational space. Another 14,000 square feet was added to their manufacturing space and an additional paint line to their Color Coating facility. With the help of a 504 revolving loan and bank financing, they were able to continue to grow their lines of credit, equipment and facilities. Full and part-time employees reached 157. The rest is history.

In 2002, Crystal added a 2,250 ton 8-inch Aluminum Extrusion Press. To accommodate this new business addition, another 20,000 square feet of building was added to the 2610 Ross Ave. facility. Employees now number 170. In 2004, Crystal completed another warehouse of 12,000 square feet (this addition joined the 2608 Ross Facility to the 2610 Ross Ave Facility). Crystal also added an additional 7 inch Aluminum Extrusion Press.

2005 was a very busy year for Crystal. They completed another 40,000 square feet of additions bringing their facilities growth to 260,000 square feet and purchased another fifteen acres of land from the Village of Weston for future expansion. They purchased Wiremaid Manufacturing (a neighbor facility) that will allow their current two facilities to function as one that will bring the facility size to 326,000 square feet with room to grow to a 900,000 square foot multiple site facility. They also added a precision double mitre aluminum saw along with other custom aluminum fabricating equipment. Crystal did a \$1.5 million dollar remodeling of their High Performance Aluminum Coating Line and installation of a thermal oxidizer (to destruct VOC's) to set Crystal up to be a Green company by April of 2006. They also successfully started a dedicated trucking company.

Crystal Finishing Systems innovative efforts towards continuous improvement have proved they are a solid successful business. They make a strong impact on the job market, produce a variety of top quality products and services, show steady growth in sales, and exhibit a commitment to current Crystal team members. Crystal currently has 265 full time employees and the number will grow to approximately 400 in 2006.

They enjoy long-term relationships with local and nationwide businesses which is due to their commitment to contributing to the economy by working with companies of all sizes in terms of offering competitive pricing, flexibility, quality product output and an ever-growing range of coatings services.

As a participant and sponsor of numerous activities, Mark makes a huge impact on his community. Contributing much personal time and resources to his church, chamber of commerce and miscellaneous local events, Mark's enthusiasm for life and intrinsic drive for success is contagious to the people he comes into contact with. Mark & Laurie incorporate many of their personal interests into the activities they dedicate their time to such as helping with fundraisers for the D.C. Everest Area Food Pantry and planning and cooking food for church sponsored events. Also for his church, Mark serves as a finance committee Chair, a building and grounds committee member, and as Chair for the building of a new church sanctuary. In 2005, Crystal Finishing won SBA's Wisconsin 2005 Small Business Person of the Year Honorable Mention Award. They were also the United Way Pacesetter Company of the year along with running the most improved campaign for the Marathon County United Way campaign.

Those at Crystal Finishing Systems realize that they are only an extension of their customers' successes. Without working and growing together, each of them is simply another vendor that can be replaced. Because of this, they feel they are no better than the last project they completed, making their goal to continue to strive towards perfection. Mark & Laurie Matthiae had the dream to create Crystal Finishing Systems, Inc. and the business know how and tenacity to make it succeed. Watch them continue to grow and prosper!